No. 43

The
REDEMPTION
of
Marie Gordon
THE TRAGIC STORY OF
WRONGED WOMANHOOD
Price 10¢

Gordon made a brave attempt to forget the incident, but he met with little success. He was constantly reminded of it by the absence of his guilty wife.

R. of M. G., No. 43.

Copyright 1926 by
THE NIELEN PUBLISHING CO.
Cincinnati, Ohio.

MANY A MAN would have given up the fight to retain control of himself under such distressing conditions. But Victor Talbot was by no means an ordinary man. He had been in many tight situations before. He had fought a number of grim battles in his life. However this one called for something he could not give.

Although his mental- faculties were still functioning, his physical strength was fast giving out.

"Good God!" he gasped. "What is this? I have never felt like this before. I wonder if there was anything in the coffee I asked the stewart to bring me. I am sure there must have been."

He made an ineffectual attempt to regain his balance. Dizzily he staggered a few steps toward the door, then collapsed on the floor in a deep, drugged sleep. Once a groan escaped his lips.

How long he lay thus, he was never able to tell. But he had the sudden sensation of hearing the rushing of water.

He felt himself going down —— down, without touching bottom. And it was very cool. His senses returned quickly.

By the time he rose to the surface, he realized what had taken place.

In his unconscious condition either Hawkins himself, or some of his hired ruffians, had thrown him overboard to die in the lake.

Victor Talbot caught a momentary glimpse of the yacht as he began the bitter fight for his life.

To his sight the ship appeared to be stationary, while the surging waters in which he struggled seemed to slip away from him. The waters were slipping away from him with sickening speed, bearing him away with it relentlessly.

Then, as he sank again, he lost sight of the yacht entirely. But he came up for the second time, and he braced himself once more to the effort of saving himself from drowning.

He was a good swimmer, but as his clothes became soddened by the water, they grew heavy.

Bravely he struggled, but gradually weakened, and at last he threw up his hands despairingly. It was useless!

His ears began to sing. His throat became filled with gurgling noises. Once more he tried with the last remnant of his fast ebbing strength.

And then, at last, he sank into ucnonsciousness, into utter oblivion.

CHAPTER 139

MRS. HENDRICKS

ALICE GORDON, aided and abetted by Mrs. Hendricks, seemed to be enjoying herself very well. These two women got along splendidly together because they were two of a kind.Each one of them had found the home life—the married life uninteresting and irksome.

They belonged to the species of married American women who are never satisfied. They wanted a new thrill and usually found it.

Of the two, Mrs. Hendricks was the most reckless. She usually went the limit.

What she did, whether right or wrong, was done with cold deliberation. She had little use for men unless she could use them to her own advantage.

But in spite of all her faults she was a great favorite with the opposite sex. She was always generous and good-natured.

She was good-looking enough, but could not be compared with Alice Gordon in that respect. Those who knew her best insisted that her popularity with men was mainly due to her tact.

Instead of expecting to be complimented by the meen she met, as so many women do, she flattered and cajoled them. She had the knack of saying the right and proper thing just at the right time.

In this method of procedure Mrs. Hendricks always found that, no matter what her women friends might say about her, the men upheld her.

She was far above the average in intelligence, a

splendid conversationalist, and always strove to make herself agreeable.

If the men in her party suggested a game of draw poker, she played with them. She was a good sport and never whimpered if she lost.

If others wanted to play a game of bridge of five hundred just to pass away the time, she seemed to enjoy that every bit as much.

As mentioned before,- Mrs. Hendricks was regarded by her many male friends as a "good sport."

They agreed that she had every right to go out and seek amusement during her husband's often prolonged absence.

And most of them were more than willing to assist her in climbing down another step of the ladder of morals.

No one had any idea what Mrs. Hendricks' income was. She lived in a nice house, and had three servants. Her more intimate friends declared that she was well fixed with money ——which was true.

There had been some rumors that an old and very rich bachelor, who lived in an apartment on the Northside, kept her supplied with money.

Whether this was true or not, could not be ascertained by those who tried it.

What they did know, however, was that she always played a good game of bridge, and that she always won if they played for money.

And they also knew that she invariably cashed in handsomely at the close of a game of draw poker.. Perhaps these were the reasons why she was so well supplied with money.

When Alice Gordon took up her abode at the Hendricks home, she found Mrs. Hendricks' companionship just the thing she needed.

There were always plenty of diversions to make her forget her marital troubles for a time.. But during the hours when her mind had an opportunity to function rationally, she worried a great deal about the inevitable future.

And she was a very much disappointed woman. She had been disillusioned in more ways than one.. But her greatest disappointment lay in the fact that Harold Wayne had left Chicago without calling on her.

The reason for this was very obvious.

Harold Wayne had left Chicago and his estate because he feared arrest for the shooting of his bitter enemy — Philip Gordon.

Wayne had been Alice's chosen anchor after parting from her husband. She had been foolish enough to believe that he would make her his wife as soon as all the legal obstacles were removed.

But Alice's dreeam faled to come true.

Harold Wayne had fled without leaving a hint as to his destination. This seemed to prove conclusively that his love for Alice had never been very deep.

As she brooded over this, Alice realized what a fool she had been. She had thrown herself deliberately at Wayne's head for no other reason than to get even with her husband for his neglect of her.

The prospect of being a divorced woman was not very alluring to Alice.

But she did not fear that half as much as the probability of being disinherited by her father, for with her sister Betty out of the way she hoped to be the sole possessor of the Procter estate.

Even the mere thought of her sister Betty always brought a new pang of apprehension.

Alice had no positive proof that Betty was dead All she knew was what Nora Evans had told her. And

for some reeason she no longer trusted Nora.

Alice did not put it beyond Nora Evans to tell a deliberate lie.

And although Alice did not know it, that was just what had taken place. Nora had lied to her.

Now that Harold Wayne was no longer one of her matrimonial possibilities, Alice had indeed cause to worry about the future.

The men she met at the home of Mrs. Hendricks were not looking for wives. They came to be amused. They came to find pleasure, and Alice had learend to hate the breed.

She called them "selfish brutes," who took it for granted that they could take liberties with her because she lived separated from her husband.

Alice wisely and steadfastly refused to be drawn into another affair with the species.

"I think you are foolish, dear," Mrs. Hendricks told her one night after a gay party broke up in her house. "Why don't you come out of the shell? Every man here to-night was simply wild about you. You gave them all the cold shoulder."

Alice smiled at the compliment implied, but she shook her head.

"They sicken me," she replied with a great deal of contempt in the words. "And I am sick and tired of being regarded as free traffic. The next time you invite that crowd, I beg to be excused."

Mrs. Hendricks stared at her guest.

"Alright, old thing," she replied with well feigned indifference. "You can have your own way about it. But if I were you, I'd try to make myself a little more agreeable. I don't want my friends to get the idea that you are a silly prude."

Alice met her friend's stare.

"I don't care much what your friends think about me," was her quick retort. "I don't have to put up with that sort of thing. Thank goodness I am still financially able to retain my independence."

The other woman smiled coldly.

Under ordinay circumstances she would have resented what sounded so much like a slur. But since Alice was the offender, she merely bit her lip.

"Yes, you are fortunate that way, my dear," she said with a peculiar lifting of her eyebrows. "You still have plenty of money. But what are you going to do when that money gives out?

"There is not a chance in a million of Philip Gordon taking you back. He is through with you. You know that as well as I do. It would not surprise me at all to hear that he married the lovely governess you seem so fond of."

Alice turned crimson and she had considerable difficulty keeping her temper down. She deeply resented the allusion made by Mrs. Hendricks.

"I am not worrying about that," she answered, not at all sure of her voice. "I'll cross the bridge when I come to it, and not before. And I wish," she added with more spirit, "you would not remind me of him — and that woman."

Mrs. Hendricks laid a hand on her friend's arm.

"My dear," she purred. "I am sorry if I hurt you. Please forgive me."

The incident was not again discussed after that. Alice remained as Mrs. Hendricks' guest and they seemed to get along splendidly together.

There was, however, one fly in the ointment. It became more and more evident that Alice could not successfully hold the money she still had.

Again and again she allowed herself to be coaxed

into a game of bridge played for high stakes.

Alice won just enough to keep her greed alive.

And then, when she plunged, she invariably lost. Within a few weeks her balance in the bank showed a most alarming decrease.

Had Alice been on the alert she would have seen something that would have aroused her supicion.

There were certain signs which were given by Mrs. Hendricks every now and then. They were correctly interpreted by the man who was Alice's partner.

The result was that certain misplays were most frequently made.

To a casual observer it would at once have become evident that an attempt was afoot to fleece Alice out of her money and break her financially.

Mr. Graves, Alice's partner, was a man with unlimited wealth back of him. He stood his share of the losses with a smile.

But it was not so easy for Alice.

"We had rather poor luck to-night, my dear Mrs. Gordon," he would say at the close of a loosing session. Then with a familar pat on Alice's burning cheek, he would add: "But you must not become discouraged. We will win the next time sure. Now don't worry. I'll back you for any amount."

But there was not a great deal of comfort in that for Alice.

While it was nice to have a rich man like this Mr. Graves for a friend and partner, she knew that the time must come when she would not be able to hold up her end financially.

The thought of accepting any of Mr. Graves' money even as a loan, had never occurred to her.

Two factors rebelled against it.

The one was her inherent pride and the thorough-

ly developed spirit of independence. The other was the more than instinctive feeling that this man fully expected some returns.

Whatever Alice Gordon's weaknesses and most glaring faults were, she was not the kind of a woman to sink to the low level of granting favors to any man for money.

Mr. Graves, obviously a man of the world and experience, made no secret of the fact that he had been captivated by the beautiful Alice Gordon.

He bestowed upon her the many little kindnesses only a lover could think of.

But so far as winning the lovely Mrs. Gordon's affection was concerned, his success was rather meager. It amounted only to an occasional smile.

"That woman is as cold as ice," Mr. Graves complained to Mrs. Hendricks one afternoon as they were sipping tea alone in the cozy drawing room. "I don't believe it is of any use to waste my time on her."

Mrs. Hendricks gave him a sharp glance.

"What do you expect?" she demanded, half in anger. "She is not the kind of a woman that will fall around a man's neck just because he is nice to her. You ought to know by this time that some women like to be coaxed. Others must be driven."

"Lord knows I have done enough coaxing," he retorted. "And I am getting tired of it."

"Then try the other method," Mrs. Hendricks suggested.

"What, driving?"

"Yes."

"She'll never stand for it."

"What makes you think so?"

"Mrs. Gordon is too independent."

"Is she?" Mrs. Hendricks smiled.

"She is, and you know it," Mr. Graver retorted impatiently.

"You can never tell until you have tried," remarked Mrs. Hendricks with an unpleasant grin. "A woman will stand for a good many things if she can't help herself. I dare say if Alice were badly in need of money, she'd forget some of that pride of hers."

This brought a smile to the man's face.

"I think I understand, my dear Louise," he said. "And I am sure the matter can be worked out satisfactorily with your help."

"Why, it is working out already," the woman retorted. "Alice has lost considerable money playing that game of bridge. And she is very anxious to recuperate. That is your chance. She must keep on loosing .Break her financially and you can bet that she will come down a few pegs."

The following day Mrs. Hendricks announced that she had made arrangements for a poker party. The news seemed to please Alice.

"You see," Mrs. Hendricks continued with a queer smile, "I am doing this for your sake, my dear. You have had such rotten luck at bridge that I began to feel sorry for you."

"Thanks so much, my dear Louise," Alice cried as she kissed her friend impulsively. "That was indeed kind of you."

"I hope you win this time, Alice," the other woman said.

"So do I." Alice's features were grave. "I simply must recuperate my losses at bridge. You don't know how nearly I am dead broke."

Mrs. Hendricks patted her friend's arm.

"But you better play carefully, Alice," she warned. "It will be a steep game."

"Don't you worry about that, my dear," Alice answered with confidence. "I have played steep games of poker before. I'll hold my own."

Elaborate preparations were made for the poker party. Mrs. Hendricks invited all of the card sharks, which included Mr. Graves.

Alice Gordon was in a most hopeful frame of mind. She felt confident that she would win. Hers was the spirit of a gambler. She belived that the time had come when her luck must turn.

Poor, foolish Alice!

Litle did she suspect that the cards were stacked against her!

At last the night of the poker game arrived. It was rather late when the game began. Before they started, Mrs. Hendricks drew her friend aside.

"Please, be careful, dear," she warned. "Most of of these men are shrewd players."

Alice smiled.

"I'll hold my own," she declared. "If I don't win I'll not blame anyone but myself.

"I'll hold my own!" Twice had Alice made this same statement. She was so sure of herself. This was her night.

But as the game progressed, it became painfully evident that Alice was not holding her own. She lost consistently.

The party was an unusually lively one. Drinks, not sanctioned by the Volstead law, were served with great frequency. The men were gay, and a spirit of recklessness prevailed.

Alice won a few pots, then lost heavily.

Finally she became desperate. She began to give I. O. U's. when her ready cash gave out. And strangely enough, Mr. Graves was always her creditor.

Again and again she plunged with the vain hope of winning back what she lost. No matter what she held, she was always beaten by a hand just a little bit better than her own.

Once she happened to be looking at Mrs. Hendricks, and she saw something in the latter's eyes that gave her a shock.

It was an expression of fiendish triumph!

And even then it did not occur to her that her hostess —— her friend, had deliberately planned with Mr. Graves to ruin her.

"I guess I'll have to quit," she said about an hour afterward in a strained voice.

"Why quit?" cried Mrs. Hendricks.

"Luck is against me," replied Alice mournfully. "Please excuse me."

As she attempted to rise from her seat, white and trembling, Mr. Graves laid a gently restraining hand on her arm.

"Don't quit now, Mrs. Gordon," he said quietly. "I'll stake you to any amount. Dame Fortune will not always frown. I feel sure that your luck will turn within the next hour. Please, stay. Here, take this stack of chips and continue to play."

Alice made the mistake of allowing herself to be persuaded.

Dame Fortune did not smile, nor did her luck turn. When the game broke up at last, Alice Gordon was horrified to realize that it would take practically every dollar she had in the bank to cover her losses. It was an awful predicament to be in.

While Mrs. Hendricks busied herself in the hall, saying good-night to her guests, Alice sat at the table figuring up how much she owed Mr. Graves.

He was seated on the other side of that same

table, trying to appear nonchalant. Around the corners of his loose mouth lurked a smile.

"I —— I will mail you a check to-morrow, Mr. Graves," she said with a pitiful attempt of appearing gay. "You will get it in the first mail."

Graves shook his head.

"You don't think for a moment I would let you rob yourself of your last dollar, my dear girl," he declared as he rose quickly and came over to her side. "I can not think of such a thing. There is no hurry about this.

"And," he added, pinching her burning cheek, I will tear these I. O. U's up if you say the word. I'll tear them up and throw them out of the window. What do you say?"

This last statement awoke Alice suddenly to the danger of the situation.

She had but to look into the man's narrow, leering eyes, to see what he was driving at. He evidently had the idea that she was cornered.

She gave him one look, but that did not satisfy her at all.

"What is it you want me to say, Mr. Graves?" she asked in a breath.

"That you will be just a bit nice to me, my dear Mrs. Gordon," he gasped, stooping over her. "You are the most beautiful woman I have ever meet, and I am simply mad about you. Yes, I am mad about you," he repeated, touching her head.

"You must have noticed that I am desperately in love with you. I —— I will tear up these notes now, and I'll be your best friend for life. I'll buy you anything you want. I'll —— "

Alice stopped him with a gesture.

She did not stop the man a moment too soon, for

he was about to crush her to his heart and press his lips to hers.

"Mr. Graves," she said, her voice steady enough, "I am not the kind of a woman you evidently took me to be. Please understand that."

"But —— but," he expostulated. "You ——"

Again she interrupted him.

"I am not yet ready to sell myself for money, no matter how large the sum offered may be, Mr. Graves. What you suggest is an insult."

However, the man, in the grip of an overwhelming passion, was not put off so lightly.

With a quick sweep of his arm he attempted to force back Alice's head and kiss her. He barely touched her cheek.

"How dare you!" She sprang away from him and measured him with flashing eyes.

Before Graves realized Alice's intentions, she had raised her hand and it fell heavily upon his mouth. The blow was repeated.

He staggered back and swore an oath.

It was then that Mrs. Hendricks appeared in the door. She saw at once what had happened, and she could hardly restrain her anger.

"What is the trouble?" she demanded.

No answer was forthcomoing.

Mr. Graves was wiping the blood from his split lip with slow deliberation. And there was a vicious light in his eyes.

"What has happened?" Mrs. Hendricks cried as she came forward and stared at her two guests.

Graves was about to speak, but Alice beat him to it.

"This pseudo gentleman!" she exclaimed with infinite scorn. "This fine friend of yours, saw fit to

insult me, and I slapped his face!"

Mrs. Hendricks no longer made an attempt to hide her anger.

"I did not expect you to treat any of my friends like that," she declared vehemently. "Mr. Graves," she added, turning to the latter, "I will apologize for the conduct of Mrs. Gordon."

The rebuke implied in these words was too much for Alice.

"No apology is due Mr. Graves," she exclaimed, trembling with wrath. "He is a cad and a coward. If he is a true sample of what your friends are, my dear, please excuse me. I will have nothing more to do with any of them.

Mrs. Hendricks recoiled as if she, too, had received a slap in the face.

"Well, I like that!" she snorted. "And you dare tell me that in my own house?"

"Yes, I dare!" from Alice.

"You are the last person on earth whom I expected to assume such a liberty!" the other woman returned, her anger at fever heat. "You evidently forget your position. I was kind enough to take you in after your husband had thrown you into the street. That is the way you thank me. You ——"

"That's enough!" Mrs. Gordon broke in furiously. "I shall leave your house this very hour!"

At this point Mr. Graves intervened.

"Won't you ladies let me straighten out your differences?" he said quietly. "Really, I am the cause of all this trouble."

Alice gave him a glance of contempt.

"Do not waste your breath so far as I am concerned," she answered.

"But I must, ladies, really, I must." Mr. Graves

stepped between the two women. "This is indeed the most regrettable affair in which I ever became mixed up. I feel that —— "

Alice waved him to silence.

"You are wasting your breath, Mr. Graves," she told him. "You will get a check for the entire amount I owe you to-morrow. And now I have no other wish except to wish you two a very good night."

With her head raised proudly, Mrs. Gordon swept from the room.

CHAPTER 140

THE UNEXPECTED

IT WAS only natural that Lester Rushford should be unpleasantly surprised to find the yacht gone from her mooring place when he returned. For a time he stood, unwilling to believe his own eyes. But it was a fact, and not what at first he thought an imaginary vision.

Roger Hawkins had seen fit to leave him behind. Then the humor of the situation appealed to him, and he started to laugh.

No doubt it had been done as a joke. But the men who play jokes on their friends don't, as a rule, go to such an extreme.

Finally he concluded that he must have been left behind because of a misunderstood order. A mistake must have been made by someone in charge of the Hawkins' yacht.

On his way homeward the idea of foul play did not suggest itself to him.

Of course, he felt sorry for Victor Talbot, who, masquerading as his valet, would have rather a hard time of it.

"Well, Victor is smart and game enough to go through with his part," he muttered to himself. "There will be the devil to paw if Hawkins attempts to get gay with that girl of his. I am sorry I did not get a glimpse of this Miss Lillian Crawford. From what am told about her, she must be a peach."

And so, willing to admit that the joke was on him, Lester Rushford went to bed as soon as he got

home. He slept well as usual.

The following morning he rōse with a strange feeling of disquietude. He was worrying about Victor Talbot.

With the help of his personal servant, he dressed and ate little or no breakfast. Like most of Chicago's rich bachelors, he dined at the club.

About the hour for luncheon he prepared to leave his apartment.

As he took the first step toward the door, the telephone rang.. He made a move in that direction, then gave way to his servant, always on the spot.

"See who it is, James," he said.

James grinned amiably and lifted the receiver from the hook. He listened attentively, his alert eyes on his master.

"A gentleman to speak to you, sir," he announced, passing the receiver to Rushford.

"Hello!" he cried into the transmitter, taking it for granted that one of his cronies was the speaker at the other end. "This is Lester Rushford speaking .Yes? What is it?"

"This is Victor Talbot," came back.

"Victor Talbot?"

"Yes —— yes. It's me, Lester."

Rushford looked his surprise.

"Why Victor!" he cried. "Where are you? I was under the impression you went on the Hawkins yacht. Did you follow me when I —— "

"Yes, I followed you," came the quick interruption. "but not the way you perhaps imagine. I called up to find out if you were at home, Lester. I must see you at once."

"Alright, you caught me just in time, old man." said Rushford. "I am about to go to the club for lunch.

Now we can eat together."

Fifteen minutes later Talbot arrived.

Save for a tired look in his eyes, he gave no hint of the terrible experience had had gone through. He even smiled a little.

The two friends shook hands cordially, then went into Rushford"s den.

"Now then, explain," demanded Lester Rushford as they were seated and puffing at a fine brand of cigarettes. "How come, Victor?"

Talbot at once related his story while the other listened with open-mouthed consternation.

He told of his verbal battle with Hawkins and that he had been threatened with death if he refused to waive all claim on Lillian Crawford.

"The damned hound had some sort of a drug put in the coffee I drank." he ended. "And while unconscious they threw me overboard."

"But you did not drown, old man," Rushford exclaimed. "How in the world did you manage to escape death?"

Talbot grinned.

"Just a little luck." he replied. "I was picked up by a man who was fishing near Milwaukee as I was about to give up. Oh, I was not far from cashing in. I seemed doomed.

"But our friend Roger Hawkins will have to try something else the next time," he added with a dark frown. "Killing me by drowning failed. I just would not stay down."

For a long time Rushford sat speechless. The enormity of the crime amazed him.

"By God!" he cried at last. "I don't know what to say, Victor. Hawkins must be crazy to attempt a thing like that. What are you going to do? Will you

have him arrested for attempted murder?"

Talbot shook his head.

"Nothing is farther from my mind," he responded angrily. "I'll settle with him myself. You can bet that I will. There will be no ——"

"But he ought to be handed over to the police," the other broke in.

"And expose the whole business?" Victor Talbot exclaimed. "Not a bit of it. In the first place, it would involve you, Lester. And then the newspapers would not stop until Lillian Crawford's name was dragged into the gutter. You know what a nasty way these papers have of distorting facts."

Rushford frowned for a moment.

"So far as I am concerned, you need not worry," he replied. "I'll stand for it. Of course, Miss Crawford must be protected. I know what sort of a story the newspapers would make out of this, if they got a hold of it. I can imagine.

"No doubt it would be better if you handle this Hawkins yourself, but I warn you to be careful. His second attempt to murder you in cold blood may not fail. He has shown that he is your most deadly enemy. I am sorry for Miss Lillian Crawford."

Talbot's cold smile expressed what he felt.

If the girl he loved had come to harm during the yacht trip, he meant to kill Hawkins.

He was absolutely determined about that!

"I'll handle that hound," he said in an ominously quiet voice. "I haven't the least idea right now what I'll do with him. Much depends upon what kind of a story Lillian tells me when I see her.

"One thing is sure, Lester," he added, laying a hand on his friend's arm. "If she tells me that Hawkins molested her in any way —— that he took unfair ad-

vantage of her, I'll fill him with lead."

Lester Rushford knew Talbot well enough. He knew also that the latter was not in the habit of making idle threats. But he did not want his friend to do a thing that would ruin his entire future, and perhaps land him in the electric chair.

"Don't do anything rash, old man," he coaxed. "You know what the result will be if you kill Hawkins. Think twice before you — —"

"Thanks for your well-meant advice, Lester," Talbot interrupted. "In this case I am going to disregard it. I'll kill Hawkins if Lillian Crawford came to harm through him. I would not be a man if I didn't."

The yacht trip, so far as Roger Hawkins was concerned, had become a dismal failure. With the aid of her stepmother he had succeeded in bringing the youthful Lillian Crawford aboard.

But it was another matter to get the sweet and lovely girl into his clutches so he carry out his villainous scheme of hopelessly compromising her, and thus force an immediate marriage.

Lillian must have had an intuition of what was in store for her, for she refused to leave her cabin at any time.

Mrs. Crawford's disappointment was keen.

She coaxed and used every method only a very

shrewd woman can invent to prevail upon her step-daughter to treat Hawkins a little more kindlly. And when all this failed, she grew angry.

"You are not going to throw this one chance away, young lady," she told Lillian as the latter sipped in the most complacent manner the tea brought into her cabin by one of the stewarts. "What in the world do you want?

"As Roger Hawkins' wife you will have everything any girl could desire. You will marry him within a month. I insist upon it. I am sick and tired of this tomfoolery."

The girl shrugged her pretty shoulders.

"Listen, mother," she answered with the most cool determination written on her young face, "the age when women were compelled to do that sort of thing is past. I won't be sold like a slave to any man. And least of all to Hawkins. I hate him."

The older woman bristled.

"You are still under age, and you'll do as I say!" she shrilled.

Lillian shook her head.

"I have obeyed you always," she said without showing a trace of resentment. "You must admit that if you want to be fair. But you are going too far when you attempt to force me into this marriage.

"Being the wife of a man like Roger Hawkins would mean a life of endless misery for me. Why, I'd rather die.

"I will tell you right now," she ended with much spirit, "I will never marry Hawkins. I won't! That is all there is to it. And if you think you can make me, you have another guess coming."

Mrs. Crawford snorted at this defiance.

"But I can send you to a reform school, don't you

forget that!" she cried.

Lillian remained her cool self.

"On what grouds, mother?" she asked. "In what way have I misbehaved? No fair and honest judge can commit me to such an institution unless he is convinced that I have broken a moral law.

"Thank God, I have nothing to blush for as yet. There isn't a man or a woman in all this world who can truthfully say that I ever went wrong. I am clean. Do you hear me? I am clean!"

Lillian's voice had risen as she uttered the last words.

As she looked at her stepmother out of the depths of her big, innocent eyes, the latter dropped hers.

"Alright," she said, rising and going to the door. "I have tried to be decent with you in this matter. If you won't listen to reason, I'll try something else."

And with her head wagging she left the cabin.

Chapter 141

THE TWO SISTERS

HEN old John Procter closed up his home on Ashland Boulevard to live with his son-in-law at Oak Manor, he discharged all the servants with the exception of his valet. Before Chicago built its beautiful suburbs both, North and South, most of the city's aristocracy congregated on the boulevard mentioned above and adjacent thoroughfares.

The Procter home, while not the largest in that section, was by far the most picturesque. It was surrounded by a small park, filled with tall trees and shrubbery.

It was here that both of the Procter girls were born. It was in its spacious drawing rooms where Alice mounted the first rung of the social ladder.

Her climb was rapid until her insane desire for pleasures, most of them forbidden pleasures, caused a break with her father.

All of Alice Procter's troubles had been of her own making. Her selfishness and mad desire for riches caused her to stoop to contemptible trickeries. To be the sole possessor of her father's fortune had become an obcession.

How she contrived to cause a separation between Philip Gordon and his wife already has been told.

Her ambition to become the second Mrs. Gordon was gratified. But the marriage brought out all the evil within her.

She neglected all the duties of a wife and mother, and her bitter hatred of the two Gordon children would

have made her a murderess if fate had not stepped in to prevent it.

That she lost her own child was due entirely to her carelessness and neglect.

She placed the infant into the hands of Nora Evans, a woman without a heart or soul. What happened need not be retold.

Then came her clandestine love affair with Willard Parker, a man far below in social rank. And she capped the climax when she deliberately encouraged Harold Wayne, who lived on a neighboring estate.

This escapade was the last straw. Her husband promptly asked her to leave Oak Manor.

And then Alice's social decline came rapidly. With Mrs. Hendricks as her sole companion and adviser, she came dangerously near to utter moral degradation.

It was her inherent pride that saved her from this.

When two women living in the same house quarrel, one of them usualy has to leave. Since the quarrel took place in the home of Mrs. Hendricks, where Alice was staying, it was the latter who was forced to vacate.

And now, with only a few dollars left, the second Mrs. Gordon faced a most disagreeable situation.

She was practically without friends and without a home. She passed the first night in a hotel, where she found little solace in her sober reflections.

She had lost everything worth having. She was no longer the proud mistress of Oak Manor, and that is what hurt her most.

Twice she attempted to write a letter to Phil, begging him to take her back, but each time she tore the effort before it was half completed. She realized the utter uselessness of it.

"No, I'll do anything else before I crawfish to

him!" she muttered, her features set tragically.

But women have done worse things when in actual want.

Alice held out as long as she could. She thought of going back to Hollywood and try for the movies. The plan was not a bad one, for she had a few loyal friends there who surely would give her a lift.

She smiled sorrowfully when she discovered that she did not have the money for the trip. The only way to get that was to earn it.

But what could she do? She had no knowledge of office work and the idea of applying for a position at one of the department stores did not appeal to her.

What if some of her former friends discovered her standing behind a counter measuring goods or ribbon? Alice frowned darkly at the thought.

Driven into a corner by sheer necessity, her mind worked feverishly trying to adopt some sort of a plan. Suddenly she uttered a soft laugh. Strange that she had never thought of this before.

There was the old home on Ashland Boulevard. It would offer her shelter—and more than that.

She could dispose of some of the furnishings in order to get enough money to defray the expenses of the trip to Hollywood.

There were handsome oil paintings and costly Rookwood vases worth a small fortune.

And so following a carefully mapped out plan Alice paid a taxi driver the last dollar she had to drive her out to Ashland Boulevard.

It was still early in the evening, and the lights had just begun to flicker in the streets. She approached the house rather timidly. It looked dark and forbidden under those tall trees.

All the shades were drawn. But as she scanned

the windows, she noticed something that startled her.

There was a narrow streak of light under one of the shades not tightly drawn. This seemed to indicate that someone was in the house.

For a long time Alice stood on the stone steps meditating.

She did not believe it possible that her father had returned from Oak Manor. Just the same the house was not empty.

Finally she gained enough courage to move up to the front entrance and ring the bell. She could hear the sound plainly. Perhaps a minute lapsed before she rang again.

And then she noticed that a light was being switched on in the hall.

The next instant the door was swung open. And then Alice received the surprise of her life.

"Betty!" she gasped, staring incredulously at the figure before her.

But the surprise was mutual. Betty's eyes, filled with horror, met those of her sister. She stood like a statue, holding the door.

She closed it mechanically, allowing Alice to enter.

"Betty!" the latter cried again, holding out her hand. "For heaven's sake, say something. Aren't you glad to see me?"

At last Betty found her voice.

"You can hardly expect me to be glad to see you when I think how you tried to have me murdered in cold blood," she said reproachfully. "Oh, Alice," she exclaimed, breaking down, "what have I ever done to you that you should treat me so mean.

"How could you send me to that horrible sanitarium to be——"

"But I only meant it for the best," Alice broke in

quickly. "And what do you mean by saying that I tried to have you murdered. A thing like that never entered my mind."

Assuming a perfectly innocent air, she took off her hat and wrap. Betty was watching her with dread.

"What made you come here at this hour?" she asked at last. "And how did you know I was here?"

"I hadn't the least idea," the older sister answered. Then in a tone quivering with weariness and suffering, she went on: "I am in terrible trouble, Betty. Oh, you don't know what I have gone through. I came here because I had no other place to go."

"No other place to go?" Betty retorted, amazed. "What do you mean? Have you left your husband?"

And then for the first time the second Mrs. Gordon showed some real emotion — emotions that were genuine.

She broke into tears and, taking her sister by the arm, she drew her into the room beyond where they both dropped on the divan.

"You—you asked me if I left my husband, Betty," she sobbed. "I have done far worse than that. I have lost everything worth living for. Oh, I wish I could die."

Betty, by nature a soft-hearted, sympathetic young woman, was deeply touched.

She had never seen her haughty sister in tears. For the moment she forgot all she had been made to suffer. With an impulsive movement she placed an arm about Alice's shoulder.

"Tell me all about it," she said gently. "I'll help you if I can."

Alice stared at the speaker unbelievingly. And then a wave of bitter remorse swept into her callous soul.

"You — you would help me?" she cried, sobbing

anew.

"That is what I said," came back in the same gentle voice. "Now tell me what is making you so unhappy."

It was some time before Alice could control herself sufficiently to speak calmly.

Finally she told her story. And she must be given credit for telling it without attempting to shield herself.

She frankly confessed her many faults. She related the various incidents which led to her being banished from her home and husband.

"I—I don't know what will become of me now," she ended sobbingly. "Oh, I am so wretched, and—and Betty, I am sorry if I treated you mean."

For quite a while the two sisters sat in silence. It was Alice's curiosity which prompted her to speak again. She asked the quesetion haltingly, and with evident embarrassment.

"You want to know how I happen to be here, do you Alice?" Betty said in reply with a pitiful little smile. "I suppose I was actuated by the same purpose. I had no other place to hide except here. My life has been made miserable by circumstancese over which I had no control.

"I am worse than a hunted animal. I am being pursued by the police for a crime I never committed. Oh, Alice you can't imagine how horrible that is. You don't know what it means to be hunted like a criminal."

Alice shot her younger sister a quick glance.

"Are you speaking about the Detroit affair in which Waterford Burley lost his life, Betty?" she inquired.

"Yes," came back. "But what do you know about that?"

"More than you suspect, sister," replied Alice. "I know also that you are innocent, for the real murderer

confessed."

For a moment Betty sat petrified. She seemed to be stunned by the unexpected revelation. She looked at Alice with a startled appeal in her eyes. Several times her lips moved, but no sound came.

"You—you know?" she gasped brokenly.

"I certainly do," was the prompt response. "And I am glad to be able to bring you this news, dear. The man who killed the Detroit artist was an Italian whose daughter Waterford Burley wronged. The moment he confessed to the crime, your innocence was established."

It took poor Betty some time to grasp the full significance of this statement.

And when it finally dawned upon her that she was no longer in danger of being arrested, she burst into tears of joy.

And while she wept for almost ten minutes, Alice was doing some fast thinking. Betty might be the means through which she could again become the mistress of Oak Manor.

Through her she could reach her father, whose influence with Phil Gordon was tremendous.

"No one knows better how unhappy you have been, dear," Alice purred softly. "And I am very sorry if I led you to believe that I was trying to keep you away from father. At the time I did not know that you were innocent, and I was anxious to hide you from the police who were then still looking for you.

"But now, since your innocence has been established beyond the faintest shadow of doubt, there is no reason in the world why you should not be happy again.

"And I know someone else who will be very happy. Bob Harding——"

Betty uttered a cry of delight.

Continued in next number

Interpret Your Dreams Yourself!

Mehemet Ali's

Oriental Dream Book

The Most Complete Dream Book Published

Each Dream has its Significance

This Book Tells You What It Is

THE MYSTERIES OF THE FUTURE REVEALED

EGYPT, the ancient home of dreams and wonders, the oldest land of culture and science, the land where Joseph interpreted Pharao's dreams, is also the home or birth-place of our work, where it was written by the ancients many centuries ago. It went through the hands of many powerful rulers of Egypt, till it came into the possession of Mehemet Ali, the famous warrior, who made use of it during the time of his successful reign.

This book not only solves all dreams but contains as an appendix the celebrated

BISMARCK'S WHEEL OF FORTUNE, or: ANSWERS OF DESTINY

The old manuscript of the "Wheel of Fortune," as stated by competent authorities, is to be found in the private cabinet of Count Bismarck and some believe that the great success of Bismarck is owing to his consultation of the "Wheel of Fortune"; but of this we have no positive proofs except his successful deeds, which made him one of the greatest men of the century.

THE MISCELLANEOUS DEPARTMENT CONTAINS:

The art of Fortune Telling by Physiognomy, Phrenology, Astrology, also by Cards, Dominoes, Dice, Tea and Coffee Grounds, Fingers, etc., Talismans, Charms, Signs.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

The lucky numbers drawing prizes in Lotteries, at Prize Entertainments, etc., also a list of Dreams, with three lucky numbers attached, list of names for ladies and gentlemen and list of letters, each with three lucky numbers attached, also a list of lucky and unlucky days for males and females, making practically four books in one.

PRICE 35 CENTS

Agents can make large sales and earn good profits. Very easy to sell. Enclose amount in postage stamps and secure sample copy.

You can order Dream Book from person delivering this book or we send same well packed, by mail, postage prepaid, on receipt of price.

BARCLAY & CO. P. O. Box 847 CINCINNATI, O.

Printed in U. S. A.